

# Review Of How to go to Confession and Examination of Conscience

## FIVE STEPS FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

1. Examine your conscience. (see following pages for a guideline)
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess your sins.
4. Resolve to amend your life.
5. After your confession do the penance Father assigns.

## HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION:

Make the Sign of the Cross. ***In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

Say the following or similar words: ***Bless me Father, for I have sinned. It has been since my last Confession. These are my sins.***

(List the specific sins which you have committed since your last confession.)

Finish with: ***For these and all the sins of my life I am truly sorry and ask pardon from God and you, Father.*** (This is so that any sins you may have forgotten, that don't come to mind just now are also forgiven.)

After mentioning of the sins which you offer to the Lord for forgiveness and whatever spiritual counselling Father gives you, the priest will give you a penance. The penance is usually a prayer, scripture reading or an act that Father asks you to do to externally demonstrate to God that you are sincerely sorry for your sins. Then Father will ask you to say your Act of Contrition. You then would say the following or an Act of Contrition prayer which you have learned. Don't worry if you don't know one Father will help you with it by having a copy to help you or even better bring this along with you and read from it.

## ACT OF CONTRITION.

***O my God I am heartily sorry for having offended You. I detest all my sins most sincerely. Not only because by them, I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who art so good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Your grace never more to offend You, to do my penance and to amend my life. Amen.***

Father will then pray the prayer of absolution in which the Lord washes you clean of your sins.

***God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sin. Through the ministry of the Church may God grant you pardon and peace and I absolve you of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

Then Father Will say:

***Your Sins are forgiven, Go in the peace of Christ.***

You Respond: **Thanks be to God.**

## **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.**

### **ST. PAUL'S HYMN OF LOVE IN FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS: 12:31-14:1**

12:31 Strive eagerly for the greater gifts.

I will show you a still more excellent way.

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love,

I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious, or boastful or arrogant

5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

6 it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

9 For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part;

10 but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully even as I have been fully known.

13 And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

14 1a Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts.

### **QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION:**

Am I as patient as I am called to be?

Am I unkind to anyone? (In thought, word or action)

Am I envious?

Am I boastful?

Am I arrogant?

Am I rude?

Do I insist on my own way?

Am I irritable?

I am resentful? Have I failed to forgive?

Do I rejoice in wrongdoing?

Do I rejoice in the truth?

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**THE FIRST COMMANDMENT:** *I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.*

- Do I truly love God above all, or do I sometimes give greater importance to things of this world: money, my work, image, looks, clothes, sports, popularity or selfish desires?
- Do I claim to have good values, but often bend or abandon them in order to fit in and be “part of the group?”
- Have I worked at developing a daily prayer life?
- Do I turn to God in thankful prayer, or do I pray mostly when I want something?
- Do I really want to be transformed by the will of God, or do I just use my religion in order to “look” like a good Christian person?

**THE SECOND COMMANDMENT:** *You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.*

- Do I show disrespect for God’s name by misusing it out of habit, frustration, anger or in bad humour?
- Do I hesitate to mention God’s name in appropriate situations, in conversations with friends and family members?
- Do I continue to learn about God by paying attention in Church, through reading and paying attention to Catholic periodicals, articles on religion in the secular press and television programs?

**THE THIRD COMMANDMENT:** *Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.*

- Do I come to Church to celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday and on Holy Days? Or Do I only attend Mass when it is convenient or when it will make me feel good? (In Canada we only have two holy days of obligation outside of every Sunday; Christmas Day and New Year’s Day.)
- Do I participate in the Eucharist by praying and singing, or do I simply sit as a spectator and wait to be entertained?
- Do I pay close attention to the Word of God and open myself to God’s call to allow His word to take effect in my life?
- Do I acknowledge the “true presence” of Christ in the Eucharist and receive Holy Communion with respect and reverence due to Christ, present in the Blessed Sacrament? Have I received Holy Communion with serious sin on my soul?
- Have I attended non-Catholic services in place of Mass?
- Have I received communion at a non-Catholic service?

**THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT:** *Honour your father and your mother.*

- Do I help bring peace and happiness to my family, or am I disrespectful of others and a source of hurt and division for those who are closest to me?

**For Parents**

- Am I generous and patient with my children? Do I spend time with them and give them the attention they need? Do I set responsible limits for them and make sure they follow rules that will help them grow into responsible adults?

- Am I willing to say “no” to my children, or am I more likely to ignore problem behaviour and hope it will “go away?”
- Do I listen to my children carefully and treat them with respect?

**For Children:**

- Am I loving, respectful and obedient to my parents? Do I appreciate the many sacrifices they make for me? Do I say “thank you” and “I love you” often enough?
- Do I do my chores without being asked, or do I wait for my parents to become upset before I move away from what I am doing?
- Do I listen to my parents’ reasoning when they say “no” to me?

**THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT: *You shall not kill. (All human life is sacred from the very beginning at conception to our natural end at death)***

- Have I injured another person through carelessness or fighting?
- Have I placed myself or others in danger because of reckless use of alcohol or other drugs? Have I caused difficulties for myself or others because of reckless use of alcohol or other drugs?
- Have I risked my life by driving or riding with someone under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
- Have I had an abortion or persuaded someone to have an abortion?
- Do I strive to forgive those who have hurt me, or do I hold on to resentment and desire for revenge?
- Do I use my powers of influence well, especially my fighting rights, in order to fight war, oppression, abortion and injustice, or do I allow these evils to continue by my apathy and my silence?
- Have I been violent or abusive either in action or in speech? Have I been physically, verbally, emotionally or psychologically abusive to my spouse, my children, other family members and/or people with whom I work?
- Do I share what I have with those in need? Do I support the life and mission of the Church by responsible stewardship – sharing my time, talent and treasure?
- Do I bring my Christianity to every day situations, or do I stand on the sidelines and complain about every flaw I can detect in others?

**THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT: *You shall not commit adultery. (Our Sexuality is sacred)***

- Do I respect the dignity of the human body and the holiness of Christian marriage?
- Do I show that respect in my speech, or are crude language and jokes often part of my conversation?
- Do I understand and appreciate the gift of my sexuality as a means of expressing my love [and God’s love] in the Sacrament of Marriage?
- Have I been faithful to my marriage vows?
- Do I keep my commitments simply because I said I would, or do I seek to nourish myself and others through my lifetime commitments?
- Have I dishonoured the dignity of the gift of my sexuality by pre-marital sex or extra-marital sex with myself or with someone with whom I am not married?

- Have I dishonoured my body by unworthy conversation or thought leading to impure actions?
- Have I viewed pornographic material in print or on the internet?
- Have I visited internet sites which treat others' bodies as objects for my pleasure and which cause me to sin at least in my thoughts or more?
- Have I encouraged others to sin by my failure to maintain good moral standards?

**THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: *You shall not steal***

- Do I respect the property of other people? Have I stolen, damaged or vandalized the property of others?
- Have I cheated at work or in school? Have I encouraged others to sin by pressuring them into helping me cheat?
- Am I honest and hardworking in school and at work?
- Am I faithful to my promises? Can I be trusted?

**THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.***

- Have I lied to stay out of trouble or to avoid a difficult situation?
- Do I gossip about others?
- Have I said things about someone, which are true, but hurt that person in the telling?
- Have I damaged the reputation of another person by exaggeration or making up stories about them?
- Can I be trusted with a secret?
- Do I stand up for those unjustly accused, or am I merely a channel through which rumours pass, whether or not they are true?

**THE NINTH COMMANDMENT: *You shall not covet your neighbour's wife***

- Have I weakened or damaged my marriage commitment through my obsession with another person? Have I acted on that obsession in any way?
- Do I respect the commitments of others and help them remain faithful to their promises?
- Do I treat my marriage casually in my conversation and attitude?
- Have I said or done anything which made a mockery of my sacred promises?

**THE TENTH COMMANDMENT: *You shall not covet your neighbour's goods***

- Am I satisfied with what God has given me, or am I jealous of those who seem to have more?
- Do I try to prove myself better than others by bragging or purchasing more things?
- Do I appreciate my own good qualities, or do I constantly compare myself with others and become bitter and resentful?
- Do I cope well with the problems that confront me and maintain my Christian hope in spite of hard times and difficulties?
- Do I truly "Seek first the Kingdom of God" in our lives and place my trust in Him?
- Do I reflect the peace, hope and joy of a person redeemed and made holy by the Blood of Christ?

## **THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH**

1. You shall attend Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligations
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
3. You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter Season
4. You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation. (All Sundays and Christmas Day and New Year's Day)
5. You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.
6. You shall assist in providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his /her abilities

## **THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS**

- Pride, Anger, Lust, Covetousness, Envy, Sloth, Gluttony

## **THE EIGHT BEATITUDES (MATTHEW 5 )**

### **1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**

Do I fear being poor, in spirit or otherwise, and prefer to be rich in money, brains, or influence?

- Is my desire for poverty of spirit congruent with my lifestyle?
- Do I use the word of God to rationalize my lifestyle, or am I willing to have God's word criticize it?
- Do I cling to my own ideas, opinions and judgments, sometimes to the point of idolatry?
- Do I contribute my time, talent and money to the poor of the world?
- Do I make it my business to examine the causes of poverty in our world and work to eradicate unjust systems?

### **2. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."**

- Do I grieve over loneliness, despair, guilt and rejection in the lives of others? And take steps to assist them in whatever way I can. I do I just avoid them.
- Am I willing to admit my own despondencies and need for comfort?
- Do I minister consolation and healing, or do I blandly encourage people to "have courage," thereby avoiding the opportunity to mourn with another?
- Am I doing anything to dry the tears of those who mourn over war, poverty, hunger, injustice?

### **3. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."**

- Do I see any value in meekness or nonviolence?
- Do I cringe at the thought of being called meek?

- Do I understand nonviolence as a way to fight evil with good, and do I choose to live that way?
- How much are intimidation and force part of my lifestyle?
- Do I work for nonviolent social change?
- Do I foster a cooperative spirit in my children?

**4. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."**

- Have I kept myself ignorant of important current events that are manifestations of injustice?
- Are my energies and passions focused on Christ, or are they scattered, disordered, divided?
- Am I honestly trying to improve the quality of life around me?
- Am I trying to improve the environment, racial relations, care for the unborn, sexual equality, the lives of the poor and destitute?
- Have I decided that I will not be satisfied until justice is fulfilled in my own life, within my family, my church, my community, my world?
- Have I let fear keep me silent when I should have spoken out against prejudice, injustice and violence?

**5. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."**

- Do I operate on a double standard of expecting mercy but not wanting to grant it?
- Do I prefer the strict law and order approach, or that of mercy, tenderness and compassion?
- Are there places in my life where people are suffering because of me and my unforgiving attitude?
- Am I devoid of a merciful spirit toward those I call "enemy"?
- What is my attitude toward capital punishment, ex-convicts?

**6. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."**

- Am I trusting and trustful?
- Do I value living without pretence, or am I constantly fearful that someone will take advantage of me?
- Am I open and honest about who I am and what I do?
- Do I deflect the attention and honour due to God and claim these things for myself?
- Have I been untrue to myself, even a little, for advancement, money or good opinion?
- Have I failed to take time for prayer, solitude, and reflection?

**7. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God."**

- Am I eager for reconciliation, or do I antagonize and yearn for revenge?
- Do I think apologizing is a sign of weakness?
- Am I willing to be a bridge in family and community arguments?
- Do I support violence in films, television and sports?

- Have I studied peace and taken initiatives to stop violence and war?
- Have I read, and do I support, the many official church statements against the arms race, nuclear weapons, war?
- Do I see the Christian vocation as one of peacemaker?
- Is my presence a source of peace to those around me?

**8. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."**

- Do I criticize or ridicule those who suffer for their beliefs?
- Am I embarrassed to step out of the mainstream to stand up for a principle?
- Who are my heroes? Are there any among them who gave their lives without vengeance for what is true?
- Would I do the same?
- Do I worship security and fear costly discipleship?
- Have I called myself Christian without making my life a witness to the teachings of Jesus?
- Have I openly supported those who defend justice and give their lives for peace?

**9. "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."**

- Do I live confident of the promises of Jesus? Do I trust God completely?
- Do I surrender to pessimism and anxiety?
- Do I perceive that there is a paradoxical victory in the cross of Jesus that breaks through power structures and conquers in peace and love? Do I live in hope?
- Have I become cynical rather than hopeful?